UNDOING *choices*

RECLAIM YOUR KIDS FROM VIDEO GAMES, SMARTPHONES, AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Yes, you can change your mind about your child's screen use & access. Here's how:

EXPLAIN THE CHANGE.
Explain in an age-appropriate way why you've changed your mind. For younger kids, it can be as simple as "New research shows smartphones are bad for kids' brains." For older kids/teens, you can share that "Smartphones and social media have now been linked to an increase in depression, anxiety, and even suicide in children and adolescents." Talk about how devices block real world experiences and how they may be getting in the way of academics, sports, hobbies, sleep, and more. Make it clear to them this is not a punishment.

LEARN TOGETHER AS A FAMILY.
Get the **ScreenStrong *Kids' Brains and Screens* Student Course,** a science-based curriculum that empowers kids to understand screen overuse and the reasons you are making the change. Share podcasts or videos of teens talking about their experiences giving up their smartphones and how it enriched their lives and friendships. Has your young child accessed harmful content? Consider resources like *Good Pictures Bad Pictures* to talk about it without shame.

GO COLD TURKEY AND IMMEDIATELY REPLACE SCREEN TIME WITH HEALTHY ACTIVITIES.
Screen time disrupts the attachment between parent and child. Removing screens is just the first step—replacing that time with one-on-one interactions is essential to restoring a healthy bond. For young kids, expect a few difficult days, but they'll adjust quickly. Teens may need two to four weeks to fully adapt. Swap smartphones for basic phones, spend more time together, and actively encourage new hobbies. Moderation slows progress; full removal is crucial for success.

BUILD A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY—CHANGE IS EASIER TOGETHER.
Join or start a book club to connect with like-minded families who share your values. A supportive community makes the journey easier and helps your children feel less isolated as they reduce screen use. Surround them with peers on the same path. Share ScreenStrong resources with other parents, teachers, and coaches to create a united front that reinforces your goals. Make your house a fun, low-tech house!

HAVE A SAFETY PLAN TO DEAL WITH WITHDRAWAL AND DYSREGULATION.
Some children will need extra support. Teenagers and children as young as 10 may become significantly dysregulated following screen removal. "If you are concerned about your child hurting themselves, damaging property, or hurting others (including you the parent) a safety plan should be put in place," says psychiatrist Dr. Victoria Dunckley in her book, ***Reset Your Child's Brain***. Consider consulting a like-minded healthcare professional and make a safety plan together.

It's never too late to rethink screen choices, reclaim your kids, & reconnect your family!

This guide is for educational purposes only and is not a substitute for medical or mental health advice. If your child shows signs of distress or mental health concerns while reducing screen time, please seek help from a licensed professional.

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ADAPTED FROM:
ScreenStrong.org and Kids' Brains & Screens by Melanie Hempe, kidsbrainsandscreens.com
ScreenStrong Live Webinar with Dr. Adriana Stacey, MD, in Connect Plus on ScreenStrong.org

RESOURCES:
Good Pictures Bad Pictures by Kristen Jensen
Reset Your Child's Brain: A Four-Week Plan to End Meltdowns, Raise Grades, and Boost Social Skills by Reversing the Effects of Electronic Screen-Time, by Dr. Victoria Dunckley, MD.